

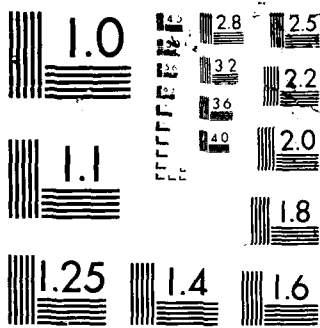
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STUDENT REPORT

THE DEACTIVATION OF THE 17 TRS--ITS
EFFECT ON USAF'S PEACETIME
TACTICAL RECONNAISSANCE CAPABILITY

MAJOR JAMES L. WILSON, JR. 88-2785

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REPORT NUMBER 88-2785

TITLE THE DEACTIVATION OF THE 17 TRS--ITS EFFECT ON USAF'S
PEACETIME TACTICAL RECONNAISSANCE CAPABILITY

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requirements for graduation.

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PREFACE

The author wishes to acknowledge that the great bulk of the research undertaken was derived from materials available at the Air University Library and the Air Force Historical Research Institute.

In those instances when data was not available, the author attempted to fill in the gaps from interviews and telecons with individuals who were in positions to have first-hand knowledge of events during the analysis timeframe. The comments and recollections of Lt Col Steve Bryan, Lt Col (Ret) Gary Cool, Major Greg Zaniewski, and Captain (Ret) Jim Reinsberg were particularly valuable and greatly appreciated. The author would also like to thank Major (Lt Col select) Jim Kippert for his advice, assistance, and patience during the preparation of this study.

The author hopes that this study will be of interest to the sponsor and anyone else interested in the history of USAFE tactical reconnaissance.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Major Jim Wilson is a Distinguished Graduate of the USAF Officer Training School at Lackland AFB, Texas, and was commissioned a second lieutenant in 1973. He attended Undergraduate Navigator Training at Mather AFB, California, and received his wings in 1974. After attending RF-4C Weapon Systems Officer training at Shaw AFB, South Carolina, his first operational assignment was with the 17 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron at Zweibrucken Air Base, Germany. While there, he held a variety of duties including Squadron Standardization/Evaluation Flight Examiner and Wing Executive Officer. After attending Squadron Officer School in 1979, Major Wilson was assigned to the Pentagon as an ASTRA Officer attached to the Deputy Chief of Staff, Intelligence, as a Soviet threat analyst. In 1981, Major Wilson was assigned to the 4485 Test Squadron at Eglin AFB, Florida, as an Operational Test and Evaluation Project Officer. In 1984, he was assigned to the Air Force Military Personnel Center as Chief, Fighter/Reconnaissance Weapon Systems Officer Assignment Section, and was responsible for the worldwide assignment of approximately 3000 USAF Weapon Systems Officers. He is a Master Navigator with over 1500 hours in the RF-4C and over 300 hours in the F-4E. Major Wilson holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from West Virginia Wesleyan College and a Master of Arts Degree in Management and Personnel Management from Webster University. He has been awarded the Air Force Meritorious Service Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, the Air Force Commendation Medal, the Combat Readiness Medal, and the Air Force Good Conduct Medal. Major Wilson is married to the former Linda Lack of Kingwood, West Virginia. They have two daughters, Jaime and Janet, and a son, James L. III.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Part of our College mission is distribution of the students' problem solving products to DoD sponsors and other interested agencies to enhance insight into contemporary, defense related issues. While the College has accepted this product as meeting academic requirements for graduation, the views and opinions expressed or implied are solely those of the author and should not be construed as carrying official sanction.

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REPORT NUMBER 88-2785

AUTHOR(S) MAJOR JAMES L. WILSON, JR, USAF

TITLE THE DEACTIVATION OF THE 17 TRS--ITS EFFECT ON USAFE'S PEACETIME TACTICAL RECONNAISSANCE CAPABILITY

I. **Purpose:** To evaluate the effect the deactivation of the 17 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron had on USAFE's capability to conduct its peacetime tactical reconnaissance mission.

II. **Problem:** The 17 TRS, located at Zweibrucken Air Base, Germany, was deactivated in December 1978 in accordance with the Creek Realign III program and replaced with a F-4D fighter squadron. Although the fighter squadron was finally bedded down at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, the deactivation of the 17 TRS had already concluded. The 17 TRS was one of three USAFE tactical reconnaissance squadrons, the other two being the 38 TRS and the 1 TRS. This research paper quantifies the impact the loss of the 17 TRS had on USAFE's ability to conduct its peacetime tactical reconnaissance mission.

III. **Data:** The methodology to assess the impact of the 17 TRS deactivation was 1) define USAFE's total peacetime tactical reconnaissance requirement, 2) determine the 17 TRS' portion of USAFE's requirement, 3) consider other non USAFE reconnaissance systems that could have supplanted the shortfall subsequent to the 17 TRS deactivation, 4) determine the amount of additional tasking assigned to the two remaining USAFE tactical

CONTINUED

reconnaissance squadrons subsequent to the 17 TRS deactivation, and 5) insert the above factors into an arithmetic equation to assess the 17 TRS deactivation impact. By researching the histories of the 10 TRW and the 26 TRW, the total USAFE peacetime tactical reconnaissance capability was determined. The major categories of mission were Creek Corps, Creek Spark, Creek Thunder, Air Request, Army Request, Exercise Support, and Local Request. Additional missions could not be flown and still maintain aircrew proficiency. Furthermore, maintenance support during this timeframe was at an all-time low because of the non-availability of spare parts and austere funding. Next, the 17 TRS' portion of the USAFE requirement was quantified. The 17 TRS flew none of the Creek Corps or Creek Spark missions because they did not possess the requisite reconnaissance sensors to do so. However, the 17 TRS conducted 38 percent of the Creek Thunder missions, 49 percent of the Air Request missions, 80 percent of the Army Request missions, 40 percent of the Exercise Support missions, and 56 percent of the Local Request mission. In total, the 17 TRS flew 43 percent of USAFE's peacetime tactical reconnaissance missions. Next, an assessment was made to determine how much of the lost capability was made up by other non USAFE reconnaissance systems. These systems fell into two categories: 1) national strategic reconnaissance weapon systems and satellites, and 2) other NATO foreign reconnaissance weapon systems. Although there were many systems capable of assuming a portion of USAFE's tactical reconnaissance requirement, none were available to do so. US national strategic reconnaissance systems were too valuable and limited a resource to respond to everyday theater tasking. NATO foreign weapon systems were flying the maximum allowable higher headquarter missions for their countries and were unavailable for additional USAFE tasking. USAFE units did not pick up the additional load. The 38 TRS and the 1 TRS were already performing at their maximum sortie capability.

IV. **Conclusions:** The deactivation of the 17 TRS had an overall negative impact on USAFE's ability to conduct its peacetime tactical reconnaissance mission. All mission areas except for Creek Corps and Creek Spark were negatively effected. Of note, USAFE's ability to respond to Army requests was severely hampered. Although there were other reconnaissance assets that could have supplanted the shortfall, none were available to do so because of sortie and aircraft availability.

V. **Recommendations:** None. For information and historical interest only.

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the effect the deactivation of the 17th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron (TRS) had on the United States Air Force, Europe (USAFE) capability to conduct its peacetime tactical reconnaissance mission. To do so, this paper will first define USAFE's total tactical reconnaissance requirements. Then, the 17 TRS portion of those requirements will be quantified. Next, there exists other NATO and US strategic reconnaissance units aside from USAFE units which must be considered. An assessment will be made as to their capability and availability to assist USAFE after the 17 TRS deactivation. Lastly, an analysis of the effect of the 17 TRS deactivation will be measured by taking the total USAFE tactical reconnaissance mission requirement, subtracting the 17 TRS portion of the total USAFE mission requirement, then adding in any NATO or national reconnaissance unit assistance. The results should show that USAFE's peacetime tactical reconnaissance mission capability was 1) degraded, 2) not affected, 3) enhanced, or some combination of the above as a result of the deactivation of the 17 TRS.

BACKGROUND

At 1630, 13 December 1978, three figures clad in winter flying gear emerged from a concrete and steel bunker into a cold drizzle and early twilight. The location was Zweibrucken Air Base, Germany. The individuals were the 17 TRS Squadron Commander, Operations Officer, and Squadron Duty Officer. The Squadron Commander and Operations Officer stood in silence as the Duty Officer shouldered the heavy steel door into place for the last time. Its great mass impacted with a dull clang, and the Duty Officer imagined the sound to be reminiscent of a death knell. He then clumsily affixed the armor plated combination lock to the steel door's hasp with fingers growing increasingly numb from the cold, damp air. For the 17 TRS, this was to be its "final hour." So ended a history rich in military tradition. Her airmen had seen three wars, a multitude of different aircraft, and countless operating locations. The three men

reluctantly turned away and slowed their way to the parking lot, each lost in his thoughts, each feeling an inexplicable loss.

The deactivation of the 17 TRS served as a the beginning of the end of an era. For "old head recce pukes" with the savvy to recognize significant events, it heralded the demise of what was termed "vanilla recce." "Vanilla recce" was largely low-level, high speed visual reconnaissance. It depended more on guts, determination, and dead reckoning than on sophisticated systems. It was "rootin around in the weeds and rocks" day or night, getting the target, and getting back to base with it. It was also, at its very essence, a dinosaur and an anachronism, a mission that had been deemed not survivable in the high lethality of the modern, high-tech battlefield. The "new recce" was characterized by stand-off sensors and near-real-time data link capabilities of both imagery and electronic intelligence. The 17 TRS' sister squadron, the 38 TRS, was so equipped. This was the way of the future. No longer was a "recce bird" compelled to fly into the heart of enemy firepower to acquire photographic intelligence. This was one of the leading factors behind the decision to deactivate one of the two "vanilla recce squadrons" in USAFE under the direction of the Creek Realign III program. (8:13) The 17 TRS was to be replaced by an F-4D squadron during the first quarter of Fiscal Year (FY) 1979. However, because of facility limitations, the fighter squadron slated for activation at Zweibrucken Air Base, Germany, was instead activated at Ramstein Air Base, Germany. The facilities housing the 17 TRS were left unused. This left USAFE with one remaining "vanilla" reconnaissance squadron, the 1 TRS. It was located with the 10 Tactical Reconnaissance Wing (TRW) at RAF Alconbury (UK). The 3rd TRS at Zweibrucken Air Base and the 1 TRS at RAF Alconbury comprised the total reconnaissance assets of USAFE.

OVERVIEW

The following section is both an overview of the contents of this paper and also a thumbnail sketch. Chapter One will introduce the reader to the purpose of this paper, provide background information, provide an overview, and define the research project's methodology, scope, and limitations. Chapter Two will assess USAFE's tactical reconnaissance mission requirements, discuss the capabilities of the RF-4C, and define the various USAFE tactical reconnaissance missions. Chapter Three will measure the 17 TRS portion of the total USAFE tactical reconnaissance mission. Chapter Four will briefly discuss various reconnaissance assets, both national and theater, which could shoulder the load left in the vacuum of the 17 TRS' deactivation. Chapter Five will assess the effect the 17 TRS deactivation had upon USAFE's ability to carry out its peacetime tactical reconnaissance mission. Last, Chapter Six will wrap up

the research product with a brief summary and, also, some conclusions will be drawn and recommendations made.

METHODOLOGY

The data to support this research paper was derived from the Air Force Historical Research Center at the Air University, Maxwell AFB, AL. Specifically, histories from the 10th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing and the 26th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing were gleaned to yield peacetime information regarding USAFE's higher headquarters tasking. Fortunately, detailed records were kept at each wing in the Current Operation Divisions of the Directorate of Operations and were published monthly. These reports included the type mission, the higher headquarters fragmentary (FRAG) order number, when the mission was scheduled, when the mission was flown, whether it was successful or unsuccessful, and if unsuccessful, the reasons for the unsuccessful accomplishment. The sum of the 10th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing and 26th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing Higher Headquarters tasking equals the total USAFE peacetime tactical reconnaissance requirement. Additionally, each squadron in the 26th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing submitted a monthly report that was used to prepare the Director of Operations' monthly Higher Headquarters Tasking report. This product served as the primary means for quantifying the role the 17 TRS played in the overall USAFE tactical reconnaissance picture. The assessment of the capability and availability of non-USAFE reconnaissance units to do some portion of the USAFE mission is largely hypothetical. Finally, this information was analyzed by using a simple formula to determine if the deactivation of the 17 TRS adversely affected, did not affect, or positively affected USAFE capability to carry out its peacetime tactical reconnaissance mission.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

It is not within the scope of this paper to conduct a detailed historical investigation of the 17 TRS or of USAFE's tactical reconnaissance capability. Rather, the study has been limited to 15 months prior and 12 months after the unit's deactivation. Thus, data collected begins in October 1977 and finishes in December 1979. Also, no assessment of USAFE's or the 17 TRS's wartime mission will be made. Further, only the missions coded 0-9, i.e., higher headquarters-directed missions, will be analyzed. All other peacetime training missions and local exercise missions will not be considered.

Chapter Two

USAFE TACTICAL RECONNAISSANCE MISSION REQUIREMENTS

OVERVIEW

Chapter One provided an introduction and defined the research project's methodology, scope, and limitations. This chapter will define various USAFE tactical reconnaissance missions, discuss the capabilities of the RF-4C including sensor configurations, and quantify USAFE's total tactical reconnaissance mission requirements. Before discussing USAFE's mission requirements, a description of tactical reconnaissance and its application at the wing level within USAFE is needed.

TACTICAL RECONNAISSANCE MISSIONS

Basically, tactical reconnaissance attempts to "obtain by visual or other detection means, information about the activity and resources of an enemy or potential enemy; or to secure data concerning the meteorological, hydrographic, or geographic characteristics of a particular area." (23:5) When this information is evaluated, it becomes intelligence. Therefore, it is "the product resulting from this collection, evaluation, analysis, integration, and interpretation which is significant to the development of plans, policies, and operations." (23:5) Reconnaissance data may be collected in a variety of ways.

The simplest and oldest form of reconnaissance is visual reconnaissance. "Recce crews" refer to this data as "Mark I Eyeball Stuff." The first known evidence of visual aerial reconnaissance occurred during the Napoleonic Wars in France when observers in balloons sketched the battlefields and relayed their information to field commanders. The information became "intelligence" when it was used to deploy troops and develop tactics against known positions. (2:14)

The next simplest form of reconnaissance is aerial photography. Aerial photography may be accomplished both day and night using a wide range of optical sensors and photo flash equipment. Up until the last few decades, visual and photographic reconnaissance comprised the bulk of tactical reconnaissance's capability.

With the advent of more sophisticated technology, modern tactical reconnaissance aircraft incorporate optical, infrared, radar, and electronic sensor systems for use in all light/all weather missions. Optical sensors run the full range of high-and-low altitude panoramic cameras; forward, vertical, and side mounted low-to-medium altitude mapping cameras, and high-altitude mapping cameras. Infrared and radar imaging sensors produce detailed map-quality intelligence from variable altitudes and in most weather situations. Additionally, electronic surveillance and reconnaissance may be performed by gathering, correlating, and processing electromagnetic energy with electronic sensors. (2:15) The RF-4C employed in USAFE by both the 10 TRW and the 26 TRW was designed and deployed to carry out all these missions.

RF-4C RECONNAISSANCE CAPABILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

It is important to discuss the RF-4C capability and equipment. Most of USAFE reconnaissance missions capitalized on its excellent capabilities. When an assessment of other NATO reconnaissance capabilities is offered in Chapter Four, this discussion will provide a reference point. USAFE operated its RF-4Cs with both standard and unique contractor supported reconnaissance sensors. Because aircraft possessing the full array of possible configurations were not assigned to all three reconnaissance squadrons (1 TRS, 17 TRS, and 38 TRS), each squadron's ability to carry out the full spectrum of USAFE's tactical reconnaissance missions was hampered. This will become important during the discussions and analysis in Chapter Five.

The standard sensors employed included the KS-87B, which could be used for low, medium, and high altitude targets. It provided automatic exposure control, image motion compensation, and all light photography. Additionally, the KA-56 low-altitude panoramic camera was employed, but only in daylight. The KA-91 high altitude panoramic camera and the KC-1B aircraft mapping camera produced photographs for topographic maps and were ideally suited for high altitude work. Film annotation for all of the photographic sensors included various documenting and orientation data. Additionally, the cameras compensated for aircraft roll, image blurring due to aircraft travel, and automatic exposure control variable through a wide range of brightness. All in all, the RF-4C possessed an impressive and efficient means of collecting data by optical photographic sensors. (13:21)

Furthermore, most USAFE RF-4Cs were equipped with infrared sensors. However, these sensors were usually not employed as a primary reconnaissance sensor.

A portion of USAFE's RF-4Cs were equipped with the UPD-6 Side Looking Airborne Radar (SLAR) mapping set. In aircraft equipped

with SLAR, the high altitude cameras and the infrared sensors were removed to make room for the SLAR recorder and antenna system. Also, a few of USAFE's RF-4Cs were equipped with Tactical Electronic Reconnaissance (TEREC). Both the SLAR and the TEREK equipped aircraft were only assigned to the 38 TRS. RF-4Cs assigned to the 1 TRS and 17 TRS were of standard configuration for all altitude still and panoramic sensors, plus infrared sensors. (13:22)

USAFE TACTICAL RECONNAISSANCE MISSION REQUIREMENTS

There were many types of reconnaissance missions conducted by USAFE. Each required tailoring mission to sensor. This is important to note because each squadron could not perform every mission.

USAFE's overall tactical reconnaissance mission was

. . .to provide tactical air reconnaissance to all friendly forces through an integrated system of aerial data collection using visual, optical, electronic, and other sensory devices and subsequent processing, interpretation, storage, retrieval, and distribution of derived intelligence information concerning terrain, weather and the strength, disposition movement, and other activities of friendly/hostile forces (5:1).

To accomplish this, the primary tasking responsibilities assigned both USAFE Reconnaissance Wings were:

1. Responding to USAFE war and contingency plans and related operational orders.
2. Performing peacetime missions as tasked by headquarters, USAFE.
3. Maintaining an appropriate state of readiness and training of personnel and equipment to provide a responsive force capable of reacting successfully to all contingencies. (5:1)

This paper focuses on the second primary task, higher head-quarter's tasked peacetime missions, as a key indicator of the impact produced by the 17 TRS deactivation. The following is a discussion of the different kinds of peacetime missions tasked by Headquarters, USAFE.

For the RF-4C, the highest priority tactical reconnaissance mission was conducting classified Peacetime Aerial Reconnaissance Programs (PARPRO) missions under Creek Corps and Creek Spark Operations Plans (OPLANS). These missions utilized the unique assets assigned to the 38 TRS and, therefore, were not affected by the deactivation of the 17 TRS. Nor could these missions be

flown by the 1 TRS. Following, in no certain priority, were Creek Thunder missions, Air Request mission, Army Request missions, exercise and contingency plan support missions, and local request missions. (5:8)

Creek Thunder missions were flown as either hunter/killer missions or pathfinder missions. The hunter/killer missions were usually flown with TERC equipped RF-4Cs from the 38 TRS, but the pathfinder missions could be flown by any USAFE RF-4C. These missions provided training for integration of reconnaissance and fighter assets. (5:9)

Air Request missions were flown to acquire imagery of Air Force interest targets. The fragmentary orders (FRAGs) were passed from the requestor, through HQ USAFE, to the reconnaissance wings. These FRAGs were usually very specific as to target coordinate, scale, and desired sensor coverage. In most cases, these missions were satisfied by still photographic imagery. Basically, the user wanted a pretty picture of a certain piece of real estate, such as airfields, ranges, bomb run-in lines, etc. (5:11)

Army request targets were much the same as Air Request targets. Similarly, the great bulk called for photographic imagery of a desired geographic point. Instead of airfields, the Army usually desired photography of land ranges, maneuver areas, camouflage detection, and exercise areas. (5:12)

Additionally, to a lesser degree, tactical reconnaissance assets were directed by higher headquarters to participate in exercises and to comply with contingency plans. Exercises such as "Display Determination," "Salty Eye," "Cloudy Chorus," and "Cold Igloo" were an everpresent ingredient in each wing's daily response to USAFE tasking. Also, Ample Gain and Creek Hatrack missions were but two of the wings' response to extant OPS plans. To expedite "bean counting" in the research methodology, I will lump all of these "cats and dogs" under the title of "Exercise Support." (5:12)

Total USAFE peacetime requirements will be quantified in Chapter Five as well as each of the respective mission sub-sets.

Chapter Three

17 TRS HHQ MISSION SUPPORT

OVERVIEW

Chapter One introduced the reader to the purpose of the research project and Chapter Two defined tactical reconnaissance missions, capabilities of the RF-4C, and USAFE's total peacetime tactical reconnaissance requirements. This chapter will explain the 17 TRS' role in conducting a portion of USAFE's peacetime tactical reconnaissance program by quantifying mission type and effort.

DISCUSSION

The 17 TRS was located at Zweibrucken Air Base and was a subordinate unit of the 26 Tactical Reconnaissance Wing under its Directorate of Operations. The squadron was comprised of 18 RF-4Cs configured to conduct tactical reconnaissance in all light/all weather conditions. The squadron was manned with 23 mission-ready aircrew members, an operations officer, squadron commander, and a complement of support personnel (administrative, photoprocessing and interpretation, intelligence, and maintenance). The squadron generally flew 16 sorties a day, 10 in the first launch and 6 in the second launch. It is important to note that the missions were prioritized as follows: 1) higher headquarters tasking, 2) exercise support, 3) local tasking, and 4) training requirements. Thus, two sorties were earmarked by the squadron scheduling section to be dedicated HHQ missions on the first launch, and one sortie was dedicated for HHQ missions on the second launch. (29:--) During the 15 months prior to its deactivation, the 17 TRS averaged 63 scheduled HHQ missions a month. This level of effort (3 per day) was the maximum HHQ effort possible while still allowing crews to maintain mission ready (MR) levels. Although the priorities placed "training" in fourth position subordinate to "HHQ," "exercise," and "local" support; realities dictated that "priority" missions were accomplished to the extent that aircrew proficiency was not lost.

The aircraft possessed by the 17 TRS were optimized for day/night photographic missions. The 17 TRS possessed no standoff capability because of sensor limitations. Therefore, the 17 TRS did not participate in either Creek Corps or Creek

Spark missions. The 17 TRS' forte was the acquisition of high quality, high resolution photo imagery. The bulk of the HHQ missions assigned to the 17 TRS by the wing fell into the categories of Army Request missions and Air Request missions. (5-22:--)

First, let's discuss Army request missions.

The 17 TRS was the primary source of Army requested photo reconnaissance support in Europe, and an Army photo intelligence unit was collocated with the 17 TRS. This unit's primary duty was to process and interpret Army requested imagery acquired by the 17 TRS. Fifteen months preceding the unit's deactivation, the 17 TRS flew 85 percent of the total Army request missions levied on the wing by higher headquarters. This amounted to a significant portion (approximately 80 percent) of the US Army's tactical reconnaissance requirements. (5-22:--)

Another major HHQ mission area conducted by the 17 TRS was supporting Air Request tasking. Again, the type of imagery requested by Air Force users was much the same as that requested by the Army, i.e., daylight, still photography at various scales and aspects. The RF-4Cs assigned to the 17 TRS contained camera and sensor suites that were optimized to conduct just this type of reconnaissance support. Each possessed a KS-87 in the forward station, a KA-56 panoramic camera in the middle station, and a KC-1B or KA-93 in the rear station. Some of the aircraft operated by the 17 TRS were outfitted with the AN/AAD-5 infrared detection set which produced all-light infrared, line-scan imagery that approached the quality and resolution of daylight, still-photographic equipment. During the period of 15 months preceding the 17 TRS' deactivation, the squadron flew for 80 percent of the wing's total Air Request commitment. (5-22:--)

Another mission area in which the 17 TRS strongly supported was the Creek Thunder program. Roughly half of the Creek Thunder requirements called for SLAR or TEREK support. Those missions were flown exclusively by the 38 TRS since the 17 TRS possessed neither capability. The other half of the Creek Thunder requirements were split between the two squadrons with the 17 TRS share averaging 80 percent. Thus, the total share of the wing's commitment supported by the 17 TRS was roughly 40 percent. (5-22:--)

Chapter Four

OTHER RECONNAISSANCE ASSETS

OVERVIEW

Chapter One set the stage, and Chapter Two and Three assessed tactical reconnaissance requirements in terms of USAFE's total needs and the 17 TRS' relative contribution. Chapter Four will explore, in very general terms, other reconnaissance assets aside from dedicated USAFE resources that could help relieve the vacuum in reconnaissance support caused by the 17 TRS deactivation. An assessment will be presented of both foreign (generally NATO) and US national strategic reconnaissance aircraft. This assessment will focus on each specific asset's capability and availability. By ascertaining the capability of a respective reconnaissance aircraft, a determination can be made as to its suitability in conducting various peacetime USAFE tactical reconnaissance missions. An opinion, based on personal interviews and open source data, will be given as to an asset's availability to perform a portion of USAFE's tactical reconnaissance needs.

NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE ASSETS

Aircraft

The workhorses of the US strategic reconnaissance program are the U-2 and the SR-71. Both aircraft are equipped with a varied array of photo, infra-red, and electronic detection systems. Each would be capable, in varying degrees, of meeting most of USAFE's needs. However, because of their limited deployment strength and their high demand, it would be extremely unlikely that either asset would offer a viable option to supplanting USAFE's reconnaissance capability subsequent to the 17 TRS deactivation.

Satellites

The information on space reconnaissance and surveillance platforms regarding capabilities and availability is extremely guarded and sketchy in open literature. Suffice to say, photographic imagery and electronic detection information provided by satellite platforms would be, in many cases,

adequate. However, cost and limited assets would almost certainly preclude their daily use at the theater level in peacetime.

NATO TACTICAL RECONNAISSANCE ASSETS

During the time frame of this analysis, NATO possessed 17 tactical reconnaissance squadrons of which three were assigned directly to USAFE, the 38 TRS, 17 TRS, and 1 TRS. Virtually, all aircraft assigned to NATO were capable of conducting visual reconnaissance, but only limited numbers possessed the on-board or strap-on equipment required for collecting data with the quality desired to meet requestor FRAG requirements. The aircraft capable of conducting tactical reconnaissance missions were the Harrier, Mirage, RF-104, Jaguar, RF-4C, and RF-4E. (23:5-6)

The Harrier, Jaguar, Mirage, and RF-104 were configured with reconnaissance pods. The Harrier carried photographic cameras and infrared line scanner detection sets, whereas the Jaguar and RF-104 carried only day photographic cameras. The Mirage typically carried a high altitude/long distance reconnaissance pod employing a long range oblique photographic (LOROP) camera, or a pod utilizing a more conventional array of four cameras and an infrared scanner/recorder. The RF-4C and RF-4E carried a full array of internally mounted photographic, infrared, and radar-mapping equipment, and comprised nearly half of NATO's total reconnaissance capability. The German RF-4Es possessed virtually the identical tactical reconnaissance capabilities as their American RF-4C counterparts with the exception of TEREC.

NATO tactical reconnaissance aircraft were not available to conduct any portion of USAFE's peacetime tactical reconnaissance mission. All NATO reconnaissance squadrons were tasked to their maximum levels by their own countries. (28:--) As seen before, National Strategic Reconnaissance systems were not available either. There were many NATO and strategic aircraft capable of shouldering a portion of the USAFE mission, but they were simply not available to do so. (29:--)

Chapter Five

17 TRS DEACTIVATION IMPACT ANALYSIS

OVERVIEW

The first four chapters of the research paper introduced the topic, defined tactical reconnaissance missions and roles, assessed USAFE's total peacetime tactical reconnaissance requirements, defined the 17 TRS role in discharging a portion of USAFE's total requirement, and discussed alternative reconnaissance assets. This chapter will provide the analytical basis for evaluating the effect the deactivation of the 17 TRS had on USAFE's conduct of its peacetime tactical reconnaissance program.

DISCUSSION

In Chapter Two, a discussion was provided regarding the types of missions that USAFE tasked its reconnaissance wings to perform. A compilation and analysis of the 26 TRW's 0-9 mission reports forms the basis of the data for the 26 TRW analysis. An extraction from the Monthly Schedule of Events was used for the 10 TRW analysis. Data was collected prior to the deactivation as well as subsequent to the deactivation to allow for comparison. It should be noted that a portion of the data pertaining to the 17 TRS' share of total requirements was missing. However, activity prior to the missing data is representative of the usual workload of the 17 TRS. The squadron was beginning to wind down operations at the start of the missing data period.

ANALYSIS

The underlying logic of this analysis is represented by a simple equation. Total USAFE requirements minus 17 TRS portion of the requirements plus other non-USAFE assets plus additional tasking levied on USAFE assets = USAFE capability after 17 TRS deactivation. When the formula is used at random times, the product is useless. Therefore, the numerical factors substituted into the equations were averages taken over a period of 15 months prior to the 17 TRS deactivation.

The total average USAFE monthly HHQ requirement was approximately 150 sorties. The average monthly HHQ sortie

requirement for the 17 TRS was approximately 65, or roughly half of the total 26 TRW requirement. Next, in Chapter Four, it was determined that the amount of support from non-USAFE assets was zero. Therefore, we can plug the following factors into the formula: $150 - 65 + 0 = 85$. Eighty-five represents the number of sorties that USAFE could normally expect to fly without the 17 TRS on board. Eighty-five sorties divided by 150 sorties is 57 percent. If 100 percent represents USAFE capability prior to the 17 TRS deactivation, 57 percent represents USAFE capability after deactivation. Thus, 43 percent represents the 17 TRS portion.

The 38 TRS and the 1 TRS could not fly extra HHQ sorties to make up for the loss of the 17 TRS, because they were already flying the maximum allowable HHQ missions and still maintain aircrew proficiency. During the twelve months subsequent to the deactivation of the 17 TRS, the 26 TRW averaged 52 HHQ sorties per month and the 10 TRW averaged 10 sorties per month. This is a reduction of 80 percent and 75 percent respectively. Another reason for the decrease in HHQ sortie production was aircraft maintenance problems. During this period, spare parts were scarce and maintenance funding had been cut back significantly. (28:--) It may be assumed that USAFE's capability dropped by at least 43 percent in its ability to carry out its peacetime tactical reconnaissance mission. The 43 percent degradation was not spread equally across all of the mission types. The general missions USAFE supported were Creek Corps, Creek Spark, Creek Thunder, Air Requests, Army Requests, Exercise Support, and Local Requests. The following table shows the approximate percentage of degradation in support for each mission area:

<u>Mission</u>	<u>Percentage Degradation</u>
Creek Corps	0
Creek Spark	0
Creek Thunder	38%
Air Requests	49%
Army Requests	80%
Exercise Support	40%
Local Requests	56%

This more realistically portrays the impact that the deactivation of the 17 TRS had on USAFE's capability to conduct its peacetime tactical reconnaissance mission.

This table summarizes the effect that the 17 TRS Deactivation had on USAFE's tactical reconnaissance mission.

<u>Mission</u>	<u>USAFE Capability</u>
Creek Corps	Not effected
Creek Spark	Not effected
Creek Thunder	Degraded

Air Requests	Degraded
Army Requests	Degraded
Exercise Support	Degraded
Local Requests	Degraded

Thus, USAFE's overall capability to conduct its peacetime reconnaissance mission was adversely affected; however, Creek Corps and Creek Sport missions were not affected.

Chapter Six

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

SUMMARY

The purpose of this paper has been to evaluate the effect the deactivation of the 17 TRS had on USAFE's ability to conduct its peacetime tactical reconnaissance mission. Chapter One introduced the reader to the purpose of this paper, provided background information and an overview, and defined the research paper's methodology, scope, and limitations. In Chapter Two the reader was introduced to USAFE's peacetime tactical reconnaissance requirements and mission definitions. Creek Corps, Creek Spark, Creek Thunder, Army Requests, Air Requests, Exercise Support, and Local Requests were USAFE's peacetime tactical reconnaissance missions being conducted at the time of 17 TRS deactivation. Different missions required different reconnaissance sensor configurations. Some sensor configurations were unique to certain squadrons. The Creek Corps and Creek Spark missions could only be flown by the 38 TRS. Generally, any of the remaining missions could be flown by either the 17 TRS, the 38 TRS, or 1 TRS. The total tasking of the three Tactical Reconnaissance Squadrons assigned to USAFE represented the total USAFE peacetime tactical reconnaissance requirement. An integral part of assessing the impact of the 17 TRS deactivation was quantifying the 17 TRS' portion of USAFE's total requirement. This was discussed in Chapter Three by analyzing the 26 TRW's Higher Headquarter's Mission Logs, it was determined that the 17 TRS flew the following percentages of USAFE's total effort. Since the 17 TRS was not equipped with the requisite sensors for Creek Spark and Creek Corps missions, they flew 0 percent of these missions. The 17 TRS flew 38 percent of the Creek Thunder missions, 49 percent of Air Request missions, 80 percent of Army Request missions, 40 percent of Exercise Support missions, and 56 percent of Local Request missions. To assess the overall impact the 17 TRS' deactivation had on USAFE, Chapter Four discussed other reconnaissance assets, aside from dedicated USAFE resources, that could have picked up some portion of the mission load subsequent to the 17 TRS deactivation. Obviously, the impact of the 17 TRS deactivation would have been nil if the same amount of reconnaissance effort had continued, carried on by different players. First, an assessment was made of the non-USAFE reconnaissance assets which possessed the capability to carry out portions of USAFE's peacetime reconnaissance mission.

For various reasons, none were available to do so. The methodology for assessing the total impact of the 17 TRS deactivation was discussed in Chapter five. This methodology was expressed by the following arithmetic formula. Total USAFE requirements minus the 17 TRS' portion of the requirements plus other non-USAFE assets' acquired share plus additional requirements acquired by USAFE reconnaissance units after the 17 TRS deactivation = USAFE capability after the 17 TRS deactivation. The contribution made by other non-USAFE assets subsequent to the 17 TRS deactivation was 0. Also, the additional load levied on the remaining tactical reconnaissance squadrons was 0. Therefore, in a nutshell, the impact on USAFE's peacetime tactical reconnaissance mission was equal to the 17 TRS' percent of USAFE's total requirement prior to deactivation.

CONCLUSIONS

The deactivation of the 17 TRS had an overall negative affect on USAFE's peacetime tactical reconnaissance capability. All mission areas, except for Creek Corps and Creek Spark support, were significantly affected in a negative way. Of note, USAFE's ability to respond to Army Requests was severely hampered. Although there were other reconnaissance systems capable of shouldering a portion of the lost capability, none were available to do so. Levels of effort in the 26 TRW and 10 TRW could have been increased but would have been done so at the expense of corresponding training loss. No correlation should be attempted to compare loss of peacetime capability with loss of wartime capability. This would be falling into the proverbial "mixing apples and oranges" pitfall. Quite simply, no comparisons could and should be drawn, and the conclusions reached may only be applied within the confines of the analysis timeframe.

RECOMMENDATIONS

None, for information and historical interest only.

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TABLE 1

	<u>Oct 77</u>		<u>Nov 77</u>		<u>Dec 77</u>	
	WG	17 TRS	WG	17 TRS	WG	17 TRS
Creek Corps	21	0	18	0	6	0
Creek Spark	21	0	13	0	11	0
Creek Thunder	33	10	18	9	22	10
Air Req	6	3	4	4	10	6
Army Req	31	31	20	17	32	29
Ex Support	45	18	47	37	48	22
Local	14	3	4	1	13	6
Total HHQ	161	63	84	68	142	73

	<u>Jan 78</u>		<u>Feb 78</u>		<u>Mar 78</u>	
	WG	17 TRS	WG	17 TRS	WG	17 TRS
Creek Corps	26	0	24	0	22	0
Creek Spark	16	0	16	0	16	0
Creek Thunder	26	14	29	10	19	3
Air Req	17	12	16	16	40	34
Army Req	47	33	17	17	25	21
Ex Support	0	0	0	0	0	0
Local	13	13	1	0	5	5
Total HHQ	145	72	103	43	127	63

TABLE 2

	<u>Apr 78</u>			<u>May 78</u>			<u>Jun 78</u>		
	WG	17	TRS	WG	17	TRS	WG	17	TRS
Creek Corps	26		0	22		0	29		0
Creek Spark	12		0	3		0	11		0
Creek Thunder	22		L	23		L	25		L
Air Req	56		0	46		0	12		0
Army Req	32		S	29		S	44		S
Ex Support	0		T	0		T	0		T
Local	20			35			18		6
Total HHQ	158			158			139		

	<u>Jul 78</u>			<u>Aug 78</u>			<u>Sep 78</u>		
	WG	17	TRS	WG	17	TRS	WG	17	TRS
Creek Corps	14		0	16		0	20		0
Creek Spark	9		0	7		0	5		0
Creek Thunder	5		L	4		L	0		L
Air Req	19		0	37		0	36		0
Army Req	16		S	43		S	10		S
Ex Support	0		T	0		T	0		T
Local	14			0			0		
Total HHQ	77			107			71		

TABLE 3

	<u>Oct 78</u>			<u>Nov 78</u>			<u>Dec 78</u>		
	WG	17	TRS	WG	17	TRS	WG	17	TRS
Creek Corps	18		0	26		0	22		0
Creek Spark	7		0	3		0	4		0
Creek Thunder	5		L	3		L	3		L
Air Req	13		0	26		0	47		0
Army Req	13		S	26		S	47		S
Ex Support	39		T	0		T	0		T
Local	0			0			0		
Total HHQ	97			102			125		

	<u>Jan 79</u>			<u>Feb 79</u>			<u>Mar 79</u>		
	WG	17	TRS	WG	17	TRS	WG	17	TRS
Creek Corps	22		*	16		*	12		*
Creek Spark	13			8			12		
Creek Thunder	4			2			3		
Air Req	3			2			4		
Army Req	13			32			10		
Ex Support	0			0			0		
Local	0			0			0		
Total HHQ	55			60			41		

* Deactivated in Dec 78

TABLE 4

	<u>Apr 79</u>			<u>May 79</u>			<u>Jun 79</u>		
	WG	17	TRS	WG	17	TRS	WG	17	TRS
Creek Corps	18		*	22		*	20		*
Creek Spark	13			9			9		
Creek Thunder	3			0			4		
Air Req	3			7			5		
Army Req	32			15			9		
Ex Support	0			19			0		
Local	0			0			0		
Total HHQ	69			72			47		

	<u>Jul 79</u>			<u>Aug 79</u>			<u>Sep 79</u>		
	WG	17	TRS	WG	17	TRS	WG	17	TRS
Creek Corps	22		*			*	6**		*
Creek Spark	13			L			3**		
Creek Thunder	4			0			1**		
Air Req	4			5			0**		
Army Req	10			T			0**		
Ex Support	0						0		
Local	0						0		
Total HHQ	53						10**		

* Deactivated in Dec 78

**Suspect Partial Loss

TABLE 5

	<u>Oct 79</u>			<u>Nov 79</u>			<u>Dec 79</u>		
	<u>WG</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>TRS</u>	<u>WG</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>TRS</u>	<u>WG</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>TRS</u>
Creek Corps	20			30			18		
Creek Spark	9			15			12		
Creek Thunder	4			4			3		
Air Req	0			0			1		
Army Req	0			0			1		
Ex Support	42			12			6		
Total HHQ	93			85			50		

TABLE 6

10 TRW Total Monthly HHQ Scheduled Sorties

Oct 77 10	Nov 77 28	Dec 77 0
Jan 78 30	Feb 78 28	Mar 78 22
Apr 78 38	May 78 30	Jun 78 26
Jul 78 18	Aug 78 32	Sep 78 28
Oct 78 30	Nov 78 28	Dec 78 24
Jan 79 22	Feb 79 19	Mar 79 22
Apr 79 21	May 79 22	Jun 79 21
Jul 79 21	Aug 79 14	Sep 79 13
Oct 79 12	Nov 79 20	Dec 79 16

Note: The following represents the approximate % of sorties scheduled per mission area:

Air Requests = 40%
 Army Requests = 10%
 Exercise Support = 30%
 Local Requests = 20%

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